

persons based upon race, color, religion and national origin.

Now we've got folks who don't want us to extend this hate crime legislation to those who would be attacked because of their gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability of the victim, and this at a time, Mr. Speaker, when one in six hate crimes is motivated by the victim's sexual orientation. And yet today's Federal laws don't include any protection for these Americans.

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Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation. It is the right thing to do. It is the humane thing to do. Let's bring protection to those who need it now, 39 years later after the act was enacted.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose this legislation because, at its core, its purpose is to punish thought; and to respectfully suggest that this new majority continues to bring sad and divisive legislation to the floor.

All violent crime is wrong. All violent crime is founded in hate.

This legislation will actually move us to the point of punishing thought and punishing motive. Hate crimes have already been used to suppress speech opposed by cultural elites. In New York, for example, city officials recently cited hate crime principles to force a pastor to remove billboards containing biblical quotations on sexual morality.

Many pastors and ministers from around this Nation adamantly oppose this legislation. And to bring this forward on the National Day of Prayer adds insult to injury and may, in fact, be hateful.

The hate crimes bill creates a new Federal thought crime. The bill requires law enforcement officials to probe, infer, or deduce if a crime occurred because of a bias towards a protected group. A criminal's thoughts will be considered an element of the crime.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully suggest that one can never reliably determine the true thought or motive of a criminal.

And with thought crimes come thought police. What a sad day.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 1 minute to the chairman of our caucus, Mr. RAHM EMANUEL of Illinois.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to hate and discrimination, America speaks with one voice, "no." Zero tolerance. You cannot be a beacon of freedom around the world and fail that test here at home.

President Kennedy was moved on the civil rights movement because he understood, in the battle of the Cold War, you could not be a beacon for freedom against intolerance around the world if

we weren't free here at home. You could not. And as we talk, all our colleagues always say, as we battle on the issues on the war in Iraq, Islamic fascism, the whole world will watch what we say here in Congress.

People will watch this vote and understand, most importantly, whether America remains true to its principles on freedom or not. People will watch this vote. And I would hope my colleagues will remember, as we do this today, that every time America widens the circle of democracy to protect more of its citizens who sit in the shadows, it is true to its principles.

I would hope people will vote "yes" on this legislation.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased now to yield 1 minute to a distinguished member of the Committee on the Judiciary from Houston, Texas, Ms. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, with great emotion, I come to this floor.

Congressman FRANK, let me thank you. No one that may be listening had the opportunity to listen to Congresswoman BALDWIN and you speak of your existence.

So I rise today to make sure that everyone understands that this bill is about hate. Regular order is in place. It is about protecting young people who have an identity that is different from any of us. It is about reflecting the definition of hatred that says that it is an affection of the mind awakened by something regarded as evil. Can we in America regard human life as evil?

Even as Christians, and many of us are not, the Bible dictates about the instruction of loving thy neighbor. This bill reflects on the needs of African Americans and Hispanics and the disabled and those with gender identity. It reflects on the fact that brutality and viciousness because of hate cannot be tolerated by a country that believes we are all created equal.

This is a fair bill. It does not encourage you to change your faith, but it encourages you to adhere to democracy and to the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1592, the "Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007." Mr. Speaker, as important as it is to apprehend, prosecute, convict, and punish severely those who commit hate crimes, we can all agree that in the long run it is even more important and better for society if we can increase our effectiveness in eradicating the desire to commit a hate crime in the first place. I have long believed, and research confirms, that if a person does not acquire a proclivity to hate as a juvenile, he or she is not likely to be motivated to commit crimes out of hate as an adult.

Mr. Speaker, Webster's Dictionary defines hate as a "strong aversion; intense dislike; hate; an affection of the mind awakened by something regarded as evil."

Mr. Speaker, before I proceed any further, I would be remiss if I failed to note that this legislation is more timely than any of us could have predicted just a month ago. Two weeks ago, at Virginia Tech University, one of the Nation's great land grant colleges, we witnessed the most senseless acts of violence on a scale unprecedented in our history. Neither the mind nor the heart can contemplate a cause that could lead a human being to inflict such injury and destruction on fellow human beings. The loss of life and innocence at Virginia Tech is a tragedy over which all Americans mourn and the thoughts and prayers of people of goodwill everywhere go out to the victims and their families. In the face of such overwhelming grief, I hope they can take comfort in the certain knowledge that unearned suffering is redemptive.

But the carnage at Virginia Tech also commands that we here in this body take a stand against senseless acts of violence taken against persons for no reason other than that they are different, whether in terms of race, religion, national origin, gender, or sexual orientation. It is long past time for our national community to declare that injuries inflicted on any member of the community by another simply because he or she is different poses a threat to the peace and security of the entire community. For that reason alone, such conduct must be outlawed and punished severely. That is why I have, Mr. Speaker, since 1999 introduced and supported strong legislation to deter and punish hate crimes, including as noted earlier, H.R. 254, the "David Ray Hate Crime Prevention Act of 2007" pending in this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, every act of violence is tragic and harmful in its consequences, but not all crime is based on hate. A "hate crime" is the violence of intolerance and bigotry, intended to hurt and intimidate someone because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.

The purveyors of hate use explosives, arson, weapons, vandalism, physical violence, and verbal threats of violence to instill fear in their victims, leaving them vulnerable to more attacks and feeling alienated, helpless, suspicious and fearful. Others may become frustrated and angry if they believe the local government and other groups in the community will not protect them. When perpetrators of hate are not prosecuted as criminals and their acts not publicly condemned, their crimes can weaken even those communities with the healthiest race relations.

Of all crimes, hate crimes are most likely to create or exacerbate tensions, which can trigger larger community-wide racial conflict, civil disturbances, and even riots. Hate crimes put cities and towns at risk of serious social and economic consequences. The immediate costs of racial conflicts and civil disturbances are police, fire, and medical personnel overtime, injury or death, business and residential property loss, and damage to vehicles and equipment. Long-term recovery may be hindered by a decline in property values, which results in lower tax revenues, scarcity of funds for rebuilding, and increased insurance rates.

Mr. Speaker, a study funded by the Bureau of Justice Statistics released September 2000, shows that 85 percent of law enforcement officials surveyed recognize bias-motivated violence to be more serious than similar crimes not motivated by bias.